[Carta a Michael Duffy, M.P., Minister of Co

PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA · THE SENATE

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SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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10th June, 1985

The Hon. Michael Duffy, MP,
Minister for Communications,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA. A.C.T. 2600.

Dear Minister,

I wish to express my support for the application made by the Australian Coalition for East Timor (ACET) for a licence to enable radio contact with East Timor.

I understand that this application was made in Darwin on 6th June, 1985.

Because there are special circumstances which surround East Timor, I believe they warrant favourable consideration of this licence application.

As you are aware, East Timor was annexed by the Indonesian Government in 1976. Very few countries have formally recognised this annexation; the issue is still under active consideration by the United Nations.

Since the Indonesian takeover, free communication with East Timor has not been possible. You might recall that the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to East Timor, in August 1983, headed by Mr. W.L. Morrison, found, among other things, that mail in and out of East Timor was censored and that movement to and from East Timor was controlled.

You will be aware that the 1982 United Nations General Assembly Resolution called on the Secretary-General to consult with "all parties directly concerned" with the view to finding a settlement of the issue.

While Fretilin does not claim to be the sole representative of the East Timorese people, the views of and participation by Fretilin are obviously crucial to any U.N. sponsored negotiations aimed at a peaceful settlement.

The radio link with Fretilin is presently the only means by which Fretilin inside East Timor can make its views on U.N. talks known immediately and directly. It is presently the only direct means by which the U.N. Secretary-General, for instance, can make contact with Fretilin inside East Timor.

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This reason alone is, I believe, sufficient grounds for allowing this radio link to be maintained.

Of course, there are other reasons.

The link will permit the views and claims of Fretilin on events in East Timor to be readily accessible to other Governments, including our own; to the media; human rights organisations; and, aid organisations.

The granting of a licence by the Australian Government does not mean that Australia has to endorse the material received in Australia. On the other hand, actions which prevented the continuation of this link would deprive us all of the opportunity to hear another important side of the issue.

I understand ACET will not use the radio link for any 'clandestine' purposes - it will be an open channel of communication with Fretilin in East Timor.

For the above reasons, added to the very modest amount of time required for transmission each week, I offer my strongest support for this licence application.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon D. McIntosh

GORDON D. McINTOSH.

SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA.